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Agenda 2030: Measuring Progress in the Montenegro's National Strategy for Sustainable Development through SDG Indicators

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Abstract

The Government of Montenegro nationalized 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development by adopting the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) in 2016, together with a corresponding Action Plan for its implementation. The NSSD is umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy of Montenegro that relates not only to environment and economics, but also to human resources, valuable social capital that should ensure prosperous development, recommendations for establishing the framework of financing and governance for sustainable development. The NSSD represents strategic framework for the transposition of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and its indicators into national context. The NSSD Action plan, divided into 6 thematic areas with 30 strategic goals of sustainable development of Montenegro and their 102 measures and 601 sub-measures, represents very complex mechanism for monitoring and reporting about achieving the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Montenegro. Hence, measuring progress in the NSSD implementation is the focus of this research. Effective measuring of the progress in the NSSD implementation could be achieved under the following preconditions: developed coordination mechanism for reporting, methodology of designing indicators, IT support for data collection and reporting, and strengthening of inter-linkages between the EU agenda and UN 2030 Agenda.

Keywords: Montenegro, sustainable development strategy, SDGs, SDG indicators

1. Introduction

Montenegro is located in the South-Eastern Europe with 623.000 inhabitants which live on 13.912 km [1]. Following the results of the referendum withheld on May 21, 2006, Montenegro regained independence and became the 192nd member of the United Nations. The economy of Montenegro is mostly service-based: about two thirds of GDP and more than 80% of employment are in the service sector in the last few years. Economic growth model is driven mostly by foreign direct investments since average net FDI in the period 2006–2016 is 17.1% [2]. Country is in the late transition to a market economy and strategic development sectors are tourism, energy, industry and agriculture with rural development. Estimated GDP for 2017 is 4.202 mil € with real growth rate of 4% [3]. According to the Statistical office data GDP/pc in 2016 is 6.063 € [1]. Measuring GDP/pc in PPS, Montenegro has reached 42% of the EU average in 2016.

Diversity of geological base, landscape, climate and soil, as well as the very position of Montenegro on the Balkan peninsula and Adriatic sea, created conditions for formation of biological diversity with very high values, that puts Montenegro among biological “hot-spots” of Europe and world biodiversity [4].

Decisions to have Montenegro developed as an ecological state requires dedication, endurance, bold decisions and significant financial investments. Declaration of the Ecological state of Montenegro, adopted by Montenegrin Assembly on September 20, 1991, emphasizes that “by respecting our obligation to the nature which is the source of our health and inspiration of our freedom and culture, we turn ourselves to the protection of the mother nature, in the name of our own survival and the future of our successors.” Following that decision, Constitution of Montenegro from 1992 contains definition of Montenegro as “an ecological state” and the same was confirmed in the Constitution from 2007, after regaining the independence. “Montenegro is a civil, democratic, ecological and the state of social justice, based on the rule of law” is prescribed in the article 1 of Montenegro’s Constitution [5].

The Government of Montenegro adopted the first National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) in April 2007, together with a corresponding Action Plan for the period of 2007–2012. During its implementation period, the Government adopted five annual progress reports on the NSSD implementation. The monitoring and evaluation results indicated that the respectable progress has been achieved—environmental pillar score 47%, social development score 65% and economic development pillar score 49%, respectively, in average about 53% of 236 planned measures from the 2007 NSSD Action plan was realized by 2013 [6]. The final estimation about implementation level was about 60% of proposed strategic measures. These measures have been modified and transposed in the new NSSD 2030.

At the UN Sustainable Development Summit in September 2015, world leaders adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development—including 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and 169 targets—to end poverty, fight inequality and injustice, and tackle climate change [7]. The Agenda 2030 calls on governments to translate the global SDGs into national targets and policies. The task of national governments is to set a level of ambition and formulate a clear, long-term vision defining what they would like to achieve with the 2030 Agenda [8]. The SDGs,

targets and SDG indicators, as well as their accompanying political declaration make it clear that countries are expected to make this national interpretation—setting their own goals, targets and priorities for implementing the SDGs, in response to national conditions and capabilities [9]. In March 2016, a global indicator framework for the SDGs—identified and proposed by the Inter-Agency Expert Group on SDG indicators (IEAG-SDGs)—was agreed by the 47th Session of the UN Statistical Commission [10]. This framework constitutes a key element of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development's implementing architecture and is composed of 241 indicators for monitoring global progress towards the SDGs.

On July 7, 2016 Montenegro's *NSSD 2030* was adopted by the Montenegrin government. Montenegro became one of the first UN member countries to conduct a national review of its process to implement the global Agenda 2030 within the national policy context. The voluntary national reviews were conducted by 22 pilot countries and presented at the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2016 meeting [6].

A periodic national monitoring report is needed to track progress and—depending on the political ambition—to promote accountability by explaining underlying developments or even to evaluate policy performance [8]. For these reasons, Montenegro's *NSSD* is accompanied with its Action plan which includes thematic areas, goals, measures, sub-measures, baseline indicators, targeted values and a proposed list of numerous indicators to measure progress in implementing the Strategy (SDG indicators, some national indicators, some indicators from the database of different international organizations and a few so-called composite indicators, such as Ecological footprint, Domestic material consumption, Land consumption, Resource productivity, Environmental performance index, etc.).

The second part presents the research framework for measuring progress in the *NSSD 2030* action plan through development of three research hypothesis. The third part presents Montenegro's *NSSD* revision through the prism of setting-up an integrated monitoring system for the *NSSD*, while the fourth part presents results of mapping and content analysis of all indicators. They encompass four groups: SDG indicators, national, international – from different databases, and proposed composite indicators. In the fifth part an analysis of needs necessities importance and main challenges of an integrated monitoring framework is presented. The focus of this part is on the analysis of complementarities between Montenegro's 2030 Agenda and the EU integration agenda. Finally, in the sixth part authors summarize the content of the chapter and main policy recommendations as conclusion.

2. Research framework for measuring progress in the *NSSD 2030* action plan

Among the various steps, during the process of *NSSD 2030* design, was the development of the *NSSD* monitoring and reporting framework. This paper is focused on analysis of the quality and capability of the developed monitoring and reporting framework in order to contribute to the preparation of regular reporting documents. At the same time, it is necessary to explain inter-linkages of the SDGs (UN agenda) and current European integration agenda of

Montenegro in order to create synergy in achieving reform goals and improve quality of life of Montenegro's citizens.

Proceeding from the above, the research hypothesis in this paper can be defined as follows:

1. The measurement of progress in the implementation of the NSSD 2030 Action Plan will be effective only if the following preconditions could be achieved: (a) the coordination mechanism for reporting is significantly strengthened and (b) a clear methodology for defining each SDG indicator is defined and (c) IT support for data collection and reporting is developed. It also involves respect of the planned dynamic of introducing SDG indicators in regular reporting process.
2. Measuring progress in the implementation of the NSSD Action plan may also be supported with introduction of other indicators proposed by the Strategy (national indicators, indicators from different databases of the selected international organizations and 10 complex indicators).
3. There are complementarities between the implementation process of NSSD 2030 and the process of the EU accession: fulfillment of the obligations of accession and later obligations of full membership in the Union, contribute strongly to the achievement of the Montenegro's NSSD 2030.

As such, this paper constitutes one of the first studies dealing with the national-level transposition of the global Agenda 2030 and its link with the process of integration to the EU. For this research we use, inter alia, a systemic approach, historical method, secondary data collection, comparative analysis and content analysis [11].

3. Structure of the NSSD 2030 and its action plan

Montenegro nationalized 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development by adopting the Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) in July 2016, together with a corresponding Action Plan. The NSSD is an umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy that relates not only to the environment and economics, but also to human resources, valuable social capital, recommendations for establishing the framework of financing and governance for sustainable development [12]. In other words, the NSSD and the NSSD Action plan are divided in the four thematic areas—four aspects of the national capital (human resources, social resources, natural resources and economic resources), governance and financing for sustainable development. The structure of thematic areas, goals, measures and sub-measures is presented in **Table 1**.

Mainstreaming the NSSD through other strategic documents of the Government is the key in successful achievement of the sustainable development in Montenegro, along with robust monitoring and reporting pertaining to results and its implementation.

The essential part of the NSSD 2030 is the Action Plan (NSSD AP). It is divided in 6 thematic areas with 30 strategic goals of sustainable development of Montenegro and their 102 measures

Goals	Thematic area I. Human resources: Improvement of the state of human resources and strengthening social inclusion	No. of measures	No. of sub-measures
1	1.1 Improve demographic trends and reduce demographic deficit	2	12
2	1.2 Improve health of citizens of all ages and reduce inequalities in health status	3	37
3	1.3 Ensure inclusive and quality education and promote lifelong learning opportunities for all	4	20
Thematic area II. Social resources: Support values, norms and behavioral patterns of importance for the social sustainability			
4	2.1 Stimulate active relationship between key actors and development sustainability	7	42
5	2.2 Develop a system of values in accordance with the community sustainable development goals	3	13
6	2.3 Develop the state as an efficient rule of law	2	13
7	2.4. Overcome the managerial deficit problems and strengthen socially responsible business	1	5
8	2.5 Stimulate employability and social inclusion	3	26
9	2.6 Improve the importance of culture as a fundamental value of spiritual, social and economic development which significantly improve citizens' life quality	4	28
10	2.7 Establish an efficient and modern system of integrated protection, management and sustainable use of cultural heritage and landscape	3	31
11	2.8 Achieve equal socio-economic development in all local self-government units and regions based on competitiveness, innovations and employment, with specific emphasis on the Northern region	2	15
Thematic area III. Natural resources: Conservation of natural capital			
12	3.1 Stop degradation of values of renewable energy sources: biodiversity, water, sea, air, soil	2	15
13	3.2 Improve the efficiency of renewable natural resource management	6	40
14	3.3 Enable symbiosis of effects of environmental performance improvement and protection of human health	2	9
15	3.4 Solve problems of unsustainable capacitating of space generated by unrealistic demand in terms of quantity and low quality of built-up areas	7	39
16	3.5 Enable resource-efficient use of metallic and non-metallic resources	1	6
17	3.6 Mitigate natural and anthropogenic hazard impacts	5	14
Thematic area IV. Economic resources: Introduction of green economy			
18	4.1 Reduce level of greenhouse gasses emissions by 2030 by 30% compared to baseline 1990	4	25
19	4.2 Improve resource efficiency in key economic sectors	5	16
20	4.3 Improve waste management through circular economy approaches	5	36
21	4.4 Enable sustainable management of the coastal regional resources and encourage the blue economy	3	10
22	4.5 Support greening of economy through the development and implementation of operational instruments of sustainable consumption and production	3	16
23	4.6 Implement social responsibility in practice of all sectors in accordance with positive European and international experiences	3	12

Goals	Thematic area I. Human resources: Improvement of the state of human resources and strengthening social inclusion	No. of measures	No. of sub-measures
24	4.7 Increase Montenegrin economy competitiveness level for sustainable development & green jobs	4	18
Thematic area V. Governance for sustainable development			
25	5.1 Strengthen governance system for sustainable development	2	9
26	5.2 Strengthen environmental management by improving implementation of environmental protection instruments	3	12
27	5.3 Implement reform for institutional organization of governance system for sustainable development	2	21
28	5.4 Establish a system for monitoring of national sustainable development, including monitoring of sustainable development goals implementation	2	15
Thematic area VI. Financing for sustainable development			
29	6.1 Establish the system for sustainable environmental financing and preservation of natural capital as a component of financing for sustainable development	4	18
30	6.2 Enable introduction of green economy by mobilizing funds for sustainable development financing	5	28

Table 1. Action plan for Montenegro’s NSSD 2030: 6 thematic areas, 30 strategic goals, 102 measures with 601 sub-measures to be achieved by 2030.

and 601 sub-measures. It is an important instrument for mainstreaming and monitoring the maturity level of the 2030 Agenda in Montenegro.

Out of 169 specific targets of sustainable development, structured in 17 SDGs, 167 were transposed into measures defined in the NSSD Action Plan, in accordance with national circumstances and future needs. Only two targets (9.a and 9.c) were not relevant for Montenegro, which confirms the universal nature and inter-sectorial and overarching character of the NSSD [12].

Gradually, all relevant institutions should determine a connection between certain SDGs and their sectoral strategies, plans and programs, measures and actions that they will be responsible for the implementation of the NSSD. Accordingly, it is necessary to determine relevance of sustainable development tasks and indicators in terms of their integration into sectoral policies which will enable harmonization of current relevant strategies, programs and plans with the NSSD 2030.

4. Statistical data producers and future monitoring mechanism

4.1. Statistical data producers

The Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism is the ministry responsible for coordination and reporting based on collected indicators. A numerous meetings and consultations

were organized between the expert team and Montenegro's official and administrative data producers. Within 36 Montenegrin institutions consulted, 26 were found to be handling data for at least one SDG indicator. Institutions responsible for generating SDGs indicators (241 SDG indicators recognized in March 2016) are the following:

I. Official statistical data producers (independently analyze and process data, calculate indicators and prepare analytical reports), responsible for 121 SDG indicators:

- Statistical Office of Montenegro (Monstat)—responsible for 55 SDG indicators,
- Central Bank of Montenegro—responsible for 7 SDG indicators,
- Health Insurance Fund—responsible for 1 SDG indicator,
- Institute for Public Health—responsible for 20 indicators,
- Ministry of Finance—responsible for 30 SDG indicators,
- Ministry of Science—responsible for 4 SDG indicators,
- Customs Administration—responsible for 2 SDG indicators, and
- Department of Public Revenues—responsible for 2 SDG indicators.

II. Administrative statistical data producers, introduced by the NSSD, for the purpose of SDG indicator calculations (responsible for 82 indicators):

- Agency for Electronic Communications (2 SDG indicators),
- Ministry of Agriculture and Rural Development (14),
- Ministry of Justice (2),
- Ministry of Education (7),
- Ministry of Labor and Social Welfare (2),
- Ministry of Transport and Maritime Affairs (4),
- Ministry for Human and Minority Rights (8),
- Ministry of Economy (5),
- Ministry of Health (4),
- Institute for Marine Biology (3),
- Ministry of Foreign and European Affairs (7),
- Ministry of Interior Affairs (19)
- Ombudsman (1),
- Biotechnical Faculty (2),
- Public Procurement Administration (1) and
- Real Estate Administration (1).

III. Applicable institutions becoming official statistical data producers following the adoption of the NSSD (responsible for 38 SDG indicators): Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism (27 SDG indicators) and Environmental Protection Agency (11 SDG indicators).

For monitoring and reporting on the progress pertaining to the implementation of the Strategy, an ambitious plan is proposed. It comprises of a collection of 525 indicators to measure progress, as follows:

1. UN list of SDG indicators (in March 2016 there were 241 indicators in total: 121 + 82 + 38 SDG indicators); However, since nine indicators repeat under two (7.a.1 = 13.a.1; 8.4.1 = 12.2.1; 8.4.2 = 12.2.2; 10.3.1 = 16.b.1; 10.6.1. = 16.8.1; 15.7.1. = 15.c.1; 15.a.1 = 15.b.1;) or three different targets (1.5.1 = 11.5.1 = 13.1.2; 1.5.3 = 11.b.1 = 13.1.1;), the actual total number of individual indicators in the list was 230. According to data from March 2017, there are 232 indicators, since some changes were made [13].
2. 252 national indicators (Human resources—58 indicators, Social resources—65 indicators, Natural resources—52 indicators, Economic resources—68 indicators and Governance for sustainable development—9 indicators); the national indicators are important in relation to the specific national needs. These indicators are already being followed or it is easy to include them in the monitoring system in a short period. They do not represent an alternative to the content to the UN indicators, but complement them [13].
3. 20 international indicators produced by international organizations (WB, IMF, World Economic Forum, UNDP, etc.);
4. 10 recommended so-called complex indicators (Human Development Index, Gender Inequality Index, Social Progress Index, Ecological Footprint, Domestic Material Consumption, Land Consumption, Resource Productivity, Genuine Progress Indicator, Environmental Democracy Index and Environmental Performance Index).

Table 2 shows the framework plan for the development and monitoring of SDG indicators in Montenegro till 2024. In 2016, only 49 SDG indicators were followed in Montenegro by name and content (20%) and for 34 SDG indicators there is an alternative by content (14.1%).

By 2018, additional 54 indicators will be produced (22.4%), which is in total 137 SDG indicators or 56.8%. Regarding the dynamics of introduction of SDG indicators into the national

Year	Number of indicators measured/necessary to be additionally introduced	Total number of indicators that will be monitored in Montenegro	Share (%)
2016	83	49 (entirely, by name and content) +34 (there is an alternative by content)	34.4
2018	54	137	57
2020	32	169	70
2022	24	193	80
2024	27	220	90

Table 2. Overview of dynamics in development/monitoring SDGs indicators in Montenegro’s NSSD till 2024.

monitoring system through NSSD, 220 SDG indicators (90%), will be introduced by 2024. This ambitious plan is developed based on projected medium term plan for strengthening capacities of Montenegro's statistical data producers and expected budget for these activities [14].

In total, 137 SDG indicators will be monitored in Montenegro by 2018 (57% of the total number of indicators) and presented in the first report scheduled for 2019. The rest of the SDG indicators (10%) will be introduced by 2030, following regular modification of its number through the United Nations Statistical Commission work. This value is comparable to findings of a recent study by Colombia's National Administrative Department of Statistics, which found 91 out of 169 of the global SDG targets (54%) to be currently measurable through the almost 200 indicators existing in the National Development Plan of Colombia [8].

In addition, different UN Organizations are custodians of numerous SDG indicators and thus in a unique position to help the country to generate data/evidence. Having identified with the Government the main data gaps against the SDG indicators, the UN System in the country (led by UNICEF and UNDP in this regard) helps generate data through Multiple Indicators Cluster Survey and other surveys (for example, surveys that seek to measure social norm change and attitudes related to key topics such as violence, ethnic minorities, people and children with disabilities, gender, immunization and so on) and raising capacities for introducing five green economy indicators for which there is a UN methodology developed (Material footprint, Domestic material consumption, Tourism direct GDP as a proportion of total GDP and in growth rate, Number of jobs in tourism industries as a proportion of total jobs and growth rate of jobs, by sex, and Change in water-use efficiency over time) [15].

4.2. Responsible institutions for the coordination and reporting process

The initial information about implementation of the NSSD Action plan was prepared by the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism in December 2017 [16] and submitted to the National Council for Sustainable Development as main advisory body and to the Government. NSSD AP will be evaluated through regular progress reports according to the dynamic plan presented in the **Table 3**. The first regular progress reports will be prepared in 2019. All phases of proposed evaluation process are presented in the table below.

The Ministry for sustainable development and tourism, as central coordinating body, is obliged to develop the detailed methodology for monitoring and reporting process. Development of a progress report methodology contains four basic elements: (a) preparation of detailed methodologies for reporting on all indicators, (b) producing reporting forms on each individual indicator being monitored ("indicator's passport"), (c) preparation of reporting methodology on the dynamics of the implementation of measures envisaged by the NSOR Action Plan, including mechanism of coordination, and (d) preparation of forms for reporting on individual measures and shares from the NSOR Action Plan. The reporting methodology is in the final phase of development and will be ready for the first evaluation process [17].

The process of implementation, monitoring and evaluation consists of few phases, and each of them is very important so the process itself represents a functional methodology. It necessitates setting up this process as to have precise defined obligations and responsibilities of all subjects

Phases	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025	2026	2027	2028	2029	2030
Data collecting and processing	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
NSSD indicators introduction	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x					
% of introduced SDG indicators			57		70		80		90						
Preparation of progress reports		x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	
Publishing of progress reports			x		x		x		x		x		x		
Analysis of data in line with UN Statistical Commission regular reports			x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x	x
Development of recommendations for improving NSSD				x		x		x		x		x	x	x	
Revision of the NSOR action plan				x						x					x
Revision of the NSOR															x

Table 3. Dynamics of evaluation process of the NSSD implementation by 2030.

involved in the NSSD implementation, with precisely defined procedures and process format and data exchange due to preparation of report of the NSSD [12]. Next scheme presents that coordination mechanism and its phases.

The UN Agenda 2030 [7] determined that “A robust, voluntary, effective, participatory, transparent and integrated follow-up and review framework will make a vital contribution to implementation and will help countries to maximize and track progress in implementing this Agenda in order to ensure that no one is left behind; As national ownership is key to achieving sustainable development, the outcome from national level processes will be the foundation for reviews at regional and global levels, given that the global review will be primarily based on national official data sources; at the same time follow-up and review in the national context is defined as voluntary instrument led by countries taking into account different national realities, capacities and levels of development and respecting national policies and priorities.” Hence, it is necessary to enable continuous realization of the program for transposition of SDGs into national context and building of national capacities for the efficient implementation in upcoming monitoring and reporting process.

In addition, the establishment of a functional information system and data base represents the basis for successful measurement of progress in the 2030 NSSD implementation. Well organized functional information system should enable not only simultaneous collecting of data by subjects responsible for monitoring of certain sustainable development indicators, or the NSSD measures, but their archiving and further processing towards efficient national and international reporting.

The central coordination institution is Ministry for sustainable development and tourism which covers three important phases of the monitoring and reporting process (**Figure 1**). According to the new systematization in the Ministry, the Department for Sustainable Development has been integrated into the General Directorate for Climate Changes and Mediterranean Affairs. As of December 2017, the Direction for Mediterranean affairs assumed the SDG related responsibilities of the previous “Department for Sustainable Development” [17]. New systematization and division of labor has introduced a lot of innovation into a system of sustainable development policies coordination. It will take time for the new internal organization scheme to be consolidated. Hence, there is potential risk of slowing down preparation of the first NSSD report scheduled for 2019.

The National council for sustainable development, climate change and integrated coastal zone management is currently chaired by the President of Montenegro and constitutes of 26 members from different stakeholder groups (national and local government authorities, the business sector, public institutions, civil society and independent experts) and four working groups (WGs): (1) WG for the revision and monitoring of the NSSD implementation; (2) WG on the Sustainable Management of Resources; (3) WG on mitigation and adaptation to Climate Changes; and (4) WG on integrated coastal zone management. The National council provides recommendations to the central government on the following: (1) implementation of sustainable development policies; (2) harmonization of sector policies under the principles and objectives of sustainable development, climate change and integrated coastal zone management;

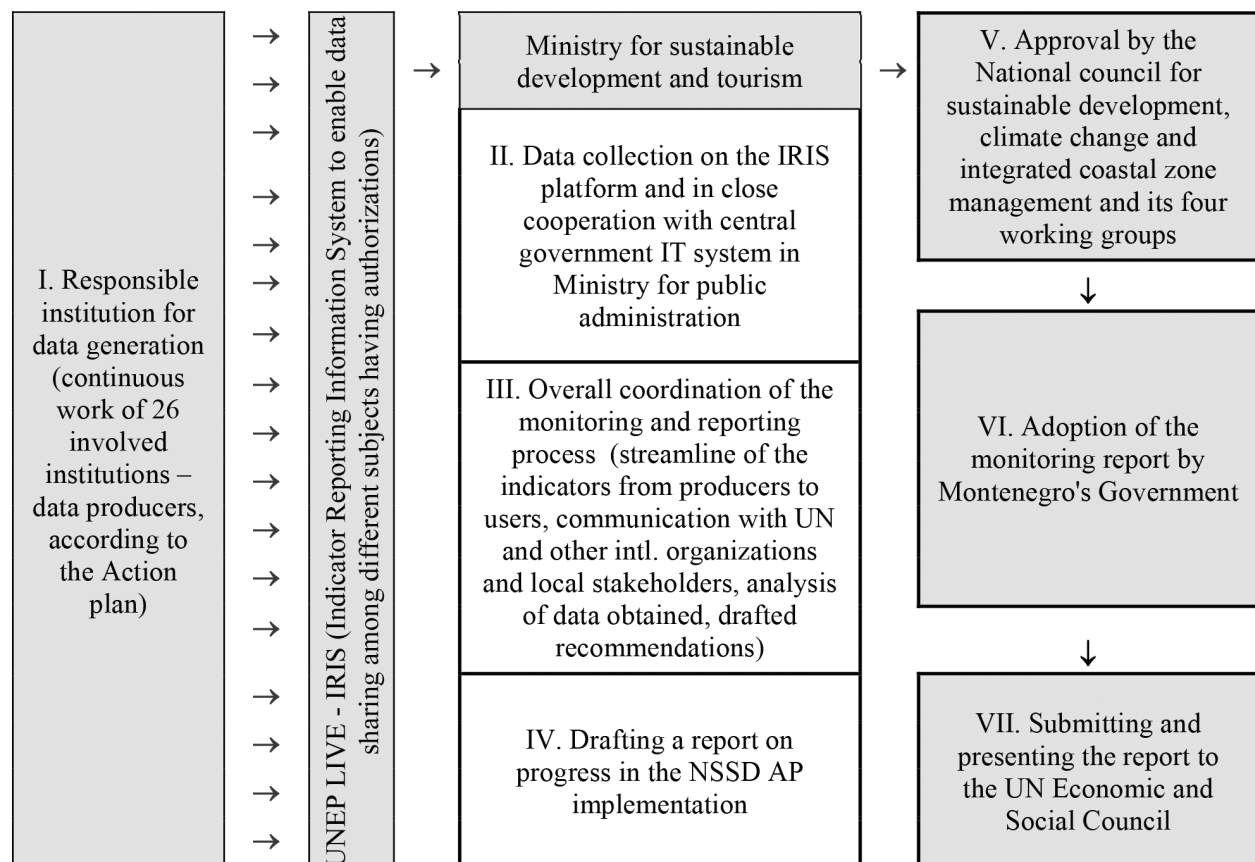


Figure 1. The NSSD 2030 coordination mechanism: Phases of the monitoring and reporting process.

(3) amendments to existing regulations; (4) adoption of new national regulations and (5) involvement in the process of monitoring the implementation of the NSSD 2030 [18].

The final phases in the monitoring and reporting process are regular adoptions of the monitoring report by Montenegro's Government and its submission to the UN Economic and Social Council.

4.3. Establishment of a functional information system for data collection and reporting

Establishment of a functional information system and data base is the foundation for successful measurement of progress in the NSSD implementation. The established system should be simple, efficient and friendly oriented towards users since its primary purpose is to facilitate implementation monitoring in order to have quality implementation of the NSSD, and not to be represent too massive and inefficient system that in practice will not work. Such organized functional information system should enable not only simultaneous collecting of data by subjects responsible for monitoring of certain indicators or measures, but their archiving and further processing towards efficient national and international reporting [12].

Existing UNEP's online reporting system (Indicator Reporting Information System—IRIS) is the solution recommended by the NSSD for organization and development of the information system. If adopted, after the ongoing test phase, IRIS will be managed by Montenegro. In this case the Ministry for Sustainable Development and Tourism, within a unit that will be in charge for the NSSD 2030 implementation [19].

5. Complementarities between Montenegro's 2030 agenda and EU agenda

Achieving NATO membership in June 2016, Montenegro's strategic foreign policy priority becomes EU membership [14]. Montenegro signed the Stabilization and Association Agreement (SAA) on October 15, 2007 and officially applied to join the EU on December 15, 2008. In November 2010, the Commission issued a favorable opinion on Montenegro's application and the Council granted it the candidate status [20]. The EU accession negotiation process with Montenegro was opened in June 2012 [21]. After five and a half years of negotiations, good dynamic has been achieved: 30 negotiating chapters have been opened (30 out of 33) and three have been temporarily closed (Science and research, Education and Culture, and Foreign affairs chapter) [22].

The programme of accession of Montenegro to the EU [23] is the roadmap for fulfillment of the accession criteria which comprises political, legal, economic and administrative criteria for full-fledge membership. Main methods for measuring progress in the EU accession talks are the following: level of harmonization of the legislation with the EU *acquis* and fulfillment of the closing benchmarks of the negotiation chapters.

At the same time, National strategy for sustainable development of Montenegro 2030 (NSSD 2030), adopted in 2016, represents comprehensive and long-term development strategy of

Montenegro that covers not only the framework period of accession process but also expected future period of Montenegro's development as the EU Member State. With adoption of the NSSD 2030 and a corresponding Action Plan for its implementation, the Government of Montenegro nationalized UN 2030 agenda for sustainable development, including its Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and SDG indicators.

The EU also implements the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs, together with its Member States, in line with the principle of subsidiarity. The EU's answer to the 2030 Agenda includes two work streams: the first is to mainstream the SDGs in the European policy framework and current Commission priorities; the second is to launch reflection on further developing of European longer term vision with the focus on sector policies after 2020—preparation for the long term implementation of the SDGs [24].

The sustainable development lies at the core of European values and constitutes an overarching objective of the Union. The EU has played a leading role in the process that led to the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and its 17 SDGs in September 2015. It is now determined to take the lead in its implementation. In June 2017, the European Council confirmed that “the EU and the Member States are strongly committed to implementing the 2030 Agenda in a full, coherent, comprehensive, integrated and effective manner and in close cooperation with partners and other stakeholders, including sub-national authorities, civil society, the private sector, social partners and academia.” The European council underlined that the EU and its Member States will act as frontrunners in this respect [25].

Having in mind all of the above mentioned, Montenegro has committed to both the EU accession negotiations and the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. This paper is also focused on analysis of relations between these processes and reporting characteristics. The main research questions are the following: (a) what is the level of similarities of those two reporting processes and (b) are there space for creating synergy and improve quality of reporting for both agendas.

Structural complementarities of these two agendas are presented in the **Table 4**. The Agenda 2030 is a long-term development framework focused on SDGs and its targets, while the EU agenda is comprised of the pre-accession period (accession negotiations process) and post-accession period and obligations arising from the full-fledged membership.

2030 Agenda as a plan of action for people, planet and prosperity, is based on achieving the sustainable development goals [12] while the EU integration process is based on achieving the accession criteria defined in negotiating chapters and related benchmarks [20]. Pre-accession assistance is provided by the EU through the Programme of the pre-accession assistance—IPA [26]. This programme is created in order to support Montenegro's integration process according to defined priorities in specific sectors. While IPA I (2007–2013) was implemented through its five components, IPA II (2014–2020) is created through sector-based approach for pre-accession support [27].

At the same time, United Nations Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) 2017–2021 is a five-year strategic framework of cooperation between the Government of Montenegro and the UN for the period 2017–2021. Strategic document called Integrated UN Programme for

Montenegro		
2030 Agenda		EU Agenda
SDGs and targets		Accession criteria and benchmarks for the negotiation chapters
National Strategy for Sustainable Development NSSD 2030		Programme of the accession of Montenegro to the EU 2018–2021
Integrated UN Programme for Montenegro 2017–2021		Indicative strategy paper for Montenegro, IPA II (2014–2020)
SDG 1. No poverty	SDG 9. Industry, innovation and infrastructure	Sector 1—Democracy and Governance
SDG 2. Zero hunger	SDG 10. Reduced inequalities	Sector 2—Role of Law and Fundamental Rights
SDG 3. Good health and well-being	SDG 11. Sustainable cities and communities	Sector 3—Environment and Climate Action
SDG 4. Quality education	SDG 12. Responsible consumption and production	Sector 4—Transport
SDG 5. Gender equality	SDG 13. Climate action	Sector 5—Competitiveness and Innovation
6. Clean water and sanitation	SDG 14. Life below water	Sector 6—Education, Employment and Social Policies (including promotion of gender equality, and human resource development)
7. Affordable and clean energy	SDG 15. Life on land	
SDG 8. Decent work and economic growth	SDG 16. Peace, justice and strong institutions	Sector 7—Agriculture and Rural Development
SDG 17. Partnerships for the goals		
Reporting in 2019, 2021, 2023, 2025, 2027 and 2029;		Reporting semi-annually, until the conclusion of the accession negotiations; Later, continued through obligations of the EU Member State;

Table 4. Montenegro’s 2030 agenda and EU agenda: goals, strategic documents, priority areas and reporting dynamic.

Montenegro 2017–2021 is designed to optimize the combined knowledge and resources of UN system organizations working under the Delivering as One modality. Strategic document was jointly developed by the UN Country Team in Montenegro and the Government of Montenegro, in collaboration with civil sector, academia and international stakeholders. The document, which articulates UN’s assistance to Montenegro in addressing key national priorities, is aligned with the Agenda 2030 on Sustainable Development and country’s aspiration to join European Union. The draft document provides a jointly agreed plan to support the country in the following key thematic areas: democratic governance, environmental sustainability, social inclusion and economic governance [28]. However, the UN 2030 Agenda does not bring an exact financial envelop that will provide financial support to the Government as the achieving SDG targets is responsibility of each of the UN member states [15]. Financial support, however, may come from external sources (vertical funds, bilateral, private donors, etc.), depending on economic/income status of the country.

In mentioned context, 2030 Agenda as a universal, global development agenda is “nationalized” through adoption of the NSSD, while the European integration process is an instrument for “EU-isation” of Montenegro with strictly defined goals, i.e., achieving EU norms and standards through achieving closing benchmarks of negotiating chapters.

We can conclude that EU (integration) agenda is narrower than 2030 Agenda, having in mind that the scope of SDGs is significantly wider than the scope of accession criteria. But, implementing the EU agenda in the process of accession, Montenegro can significantly support implementation of the UN agenda for sustainable development.

The next level of analysis of inter-linkages between the EU accession criteria and 2030 Agenda for sustainable development in Montenegro's case is the analysis of EU negotiation chapters and SDGs and specific SDG targets. Based on above mentioned analysis, it is possible to make a link between negotiation chapters and sub-chapters with SDGs and SDG targets, with the following explanations:

- **SDG1** (No poverty) is linked with C19—Employment and social policy;
- **SDG2** (No hunger including sustainable agriculture) is linked with C11—Agriculture and rural development, but also with C12—Food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary policy and C25—Science and research;
- **SDG3** (Good health and well-being) is linked with C12—Food safety, veterinary and phyto-sanitary policy, C23—Justice and fundamental rights; C25—Science and research and C28—Consumer and health protection; For instance, EU requests are much smaller in C28 than scope of SDG 3 and its targets;
- **SDG4** (Quality education) is linked with C26 Education and culture, as well as with C25 Science and research; EU requests are much smaller than scope of SDG 4 and its targets;
- **SDG5** (Gender equality) is linked with C23—Justice and fundamental rights; It is important to mention that interim benchmarks in part “Fundamental rights” are very connected with SDGs 3, 5, 10 and 16;
- **SDG6** (Clean water and sanitation), **SDG12** (Responsible consumption and production), **SDG13** (Climate action) and **SDG15** (Life on land) are clearly linked to chapter 27—Environment;
- **SDG7** (Affordable and clean energy) is linked to C15—Energy;
- **SDG8** is linked to the following “economic” negotiation chapters: C1–C7, C9, C17, C19, C25 and C29;
- **SDG9** is linked to the following chapters: C10, C14, C20, C21 (Trans-European Networks and Regional Policy);
- **SDG10** (Reduced inequalities) is linked with C19 - Employment and social policy and C23—Judiciary and fundamental rights;

- **SDG11** (Sustainable cities and communities) is linked with 27—Environment, but also with C26—Education and culture;
- **SDG12** (Sustainable consumption and production) as well as **SDG13** (Climate action) is linked with 27—Environment;
- **SDG14** (Life below water) is linked with C13—Fishery and C27—Environment;
- **SDG15** (Life on land) is also linked with 27—Environment;
- **SDG16** (Peace, justice and strong institutions) is linked with C8 (Competition and State Aid), C22 Regional policy, C23 & C23—Rule of Law chapters, C31—Foreign, security and defense policy and C33—Financial and budgetary provisions;
- **SDG17** (Partnership for the goals) is linked with C16—Taxation, C17—EMU, C18—Statistics, C22 - Regional policy, C24—Justice, freedom and security, C30—Foreign policy, C32 (Financial control) and C33 (Financial and budgetary provisions);

Using the explained methodology, it is possible to “cover” all SDGs with areas of the negotiation, but not with the same intensity. The European integration process has better potential to ‘accelerate’ SDG achievement when they are linked to economic development, but less in the areas of social dimension of development.

Today, social realities within European countries (including both Member States and Candidate Countries) differ greatly, especially in the areas such as education and health, employment patterns, wages, incomes and social protection systems. Unemployment rates are falling but differ substantially across Europe, youth unemployment is falling but remains high, employment is recovering and growing steadily, but employment rates differ; social protection systems also differ across Europe [29]. Hence, special attention should be given in the forthcoming period to the **social** dimension of development and negative externalities of economic growth even during the process of European integration.

Through the pre-accession support, Berlin process and the Connectivity agenda (followed with the international financial institutions), the EU will continue to support building infrastructure in energy, transport, environment and social policy area. We can conclude that European pre-accession assistance and future EU structural fund support are excellent opportunities also in the areas of green economy and support for local sustainable economic development projects.

If we compare the closing benchmarks with the level of achievement of SDGs and SDG targets measured through SDG indicators—the conclusion could be the same. Based on the content analysis, 74 closing benchmarks and 83 interim benchmarks, defined for specific negotiation chapters within the process of EU accession talks of Montenegro [14], cover more than 60% of SDG related targets, which confirm high level of complementarities of those two processes. It is specifically important for potential improvement of their monitoring and reporting documents through close cooperation of their coordination structures for reporting and using of the same indicators in a lot of cases.

6. Conclusions

The Government of Montenegro nationalized 2030 Agenda on Sustainable Development by adopting the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSSD) in 2016, together with a corresponding Action Plan for its implementation. The NSSD is umbrella, horizontal and long-term development strategy of Montenegro that relates not only to environment and economics, but also to human resources, valuable social capital that should ensure prosperous development, recommendations for establishing the framework of financing and governance for sustainable development. The NSSD represents strategic framework for the transposition of the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) and its indicators into national context. The NSSD Action plan, divided in six thematic areas with 30 strategic goals of sustainable development of Montenegro and their 102 measures and 601 sub-measures, represents very complex mechanism for monitoring and reporting about achieving the UN sustainable development goals (SDGs) in Montenegro.

The key phase for success of the NSSD 2030 implementation, and therefore for achieving sustainable development of Montenegro, is monitoring and reporting on the results of its implementation. This paper is focused on analysis of readiness of Montenegro to prepare the first monitoring report on the NSSD 2030 implementation scheduled for 2019.

Based on conducted analysis, we can conclude that Montenegro is well advanced in preparation of all preconditions for that process. We based this conclusion on the following achievements analyzed:

- The NSSD 2030 coordination mechanism is already developed, which includes responsible data producers, line ministries, implementing agencies, advisory bodies, working groups and other local stakeholders.
- Twenty-six institutions: data generators are identified and preparatory training for them is scheduled in 2018; 137 SDG indicators will be monitored in Montenegro by 2018 (57% of the total number of indicators); the report process will include collection of 252 national indicators, 20 international indicators produced by selected international organizations and 10 composite indicators.
- Development of a progress report methodology contains four basic elements: (a) preparation of detailed methodologies for reporting on all indicators, (b) producing reporting forms on each individual indicator being monitored ("indicator's passport"), (c) preparation of reporting methodology on the dynamics of the implementation of measures envisaged by the NSOR Action Plan, including mechanism of coordination, and (d) preparation of forms for reporting on individual measures and shares from the NSOR Action Plan. The reporting methodology is in final phase of development and will be ready for the first evaluation process.
- Ministry for sustainable development and tourism has already received the IRIS platform from UNEP and by the early 2018 system will be tested within the Ministry, including

estimation of the level of its interoperability/compatibility with the Government IT system.

- The conducted above research analysis confirmed that there are complementarities between the implementation process of NSSD 2030 and the process of the EU accession; fulfillment of the obligations of accession and later obligations of full membership in the Union, contribute strongly to the achievement of the Montenegro's NSSD 2030. In the final phase of the European integration process of Montenegro it would be very useful to further strengthen recognized inter-linkages between the EU agenda and UN 2030 Agenda (SDGs and negotiation chapters and sub-chapters; closing benchmarks and SDG targets; pre-accession assistance and transposition of SDGs into national development policy context).

In order to be better prepared for development of the first monitoring report for the NSSD 2030, Montenegrin authorities should also organize a series of public awareness sensible campaign on local level about importance of UN SDGs for overall social and economic development of Montenegro.

In addition to all of the above mentioned, the Instrument for pre-accession assistance should be used more for greening of Montenegrin economy and achieving of the SDGs, along with finding additional sources for funding the NSSD 2030 implementation. European investment and structural funds support will follow the pre-accession assistance and could strongly support Montenegro's sustainable economic development projects.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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